

For 8 years now, I have worked to set forth a new vision of Government and politics that marries our most enduring values to the demands of the new information age. In many ways, the Electronic Signatures Act exemplifies that vision. It shows what we in Washington can accomplish when we put progress above partisanship, when we reach across party lines to work for the American people and our common future.

I want to congratulate the many organizations and again, the lawmakers in both parties, and the members of our administration who worked so hard to get this bill passed, and offer a special thanks to Vice President Gore who long ago had the vision to understand the potential of this technology, and who has led our administration's efforts to harness that potential to benefit all Americans.

Now, let's see if this works.

[At this point, the President electronically signed the bill.]

Now, we have to wait a while while the act comes up and the magic has worked. It's amazing to think that Americans will soon be using cards like this one for everything from hiring a lawyer to closing a mortgage. Just imagine if this had existed 224 years ago, the Founding Fathers wouldn't have had to come all the way to Philadelphia on July 4th for the Declaration of Independence. They could have E-mailed their "John Hancocks" in.

[The President verified the electronic signature.]

Well, it works, and it will work for you. And all of you young people will someday look back on this day that you were here and marvel that we thought it was any big deal. *[Laughter]* And that will be the ultimate test of success. I wish you well, I hope we've done a good job of preparing your future.

Happy Fourth of July weekend. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:57 a.m. at Congress Hall in the Independence National Historical Park. S. 761, approved June 30, was assigned Public Law No. 106-229.

Statement on the Nomination of Roger Gregory to the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit

June 30, 2000

Today I am very pleased to announce the nomination of Roger Gregory to serve on the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit. Roger Gregory is a highly qualified candidate who will, if confirmed, serve the fourth circuit and our Nation with distinction.

His life story is also a testament to the power and promise of the American dream. Roger Gregory is from Richmond, Virginia, and is the first in his family to finish high school. He went on to college and law school, returning as a young adjunct professor to a school where his mother had worked as a maid. Today Roger Gregory is a highly respected Richmond litigator. He has tried hundreds of cases in the Virginia courts.

I am honored to nominate Roger Gregory because he is highly qualified and a strong candidate. But I am also proud to nominate a man who, if confirmed, will be the first African-American ever to serve on the fourth circuit. The fourth circuit has the largest African-American population of any circuit in this country, yet it has never had an African-American appellate judge. It is long past time to right that wrong. Justice may be blind, but we all know that diversity in the courts, as in all aspects of society, sharpens our vision and makes us a stronger nation. Roger Gregory's confirmation would be an historic step for the people of Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, and for American justice.

The fourth circuit needs Roger Gregory. Its caseload has increased by over 15 percent in just 5 years yet more than a quarter of its bench stands empty. The seat for which I have nominated Roger Gregory has been declared a judicial emergency by the Administrative Office of the United States Courts. It has been vacant almost a decade, longer than any seat in the Nation. That is an embarrassment for any American who cares about our justice system. We cannot be tough on crime if our courts cannot conduct judicial

reviews promptly and efficiently. And we cannot be tough on crime if the message we send Americans is that we do not care about our courts.

By all rights, Roger Gregory should be given a Senate vote in the next few months. But the Senate's failure to fulfill its obligations with respect to my nominees gives me cause for profound concern. Thirty-nine of my judicial nominees are pending before the Senate. These nominees have been kept waiting, on average, 273 days. And the fourth circuit has fared particularly poorly—my other fourth circuit nominee, Judge James Wynn, an African-American judge on the North Carolina Court of Appeals, has already been kept waiting for 330 days. I urge the Senate to give Roger Gregory and Judge Wynn the Senate votes that they so richly deserve.

We cannot afford to allow political considerations to empty our courts and put justice on hold. I have worked very hard to avoid contentious ideological fights over nominees. I have worked hard to put forward good, qualified candidates who reflect the diversity of our Nation. The judges I have nominated during my tenure as President are the most diverse group in history. They have also garnered, as a group, the highest American Bar Association ratings of any President's nominees in nearly 40 years. They have shattered the myth that diversity and quality do not go hand in hand. But despite the high qualifications of my nominees, there is a mounting vacancy crisis in our courts. Too often, we are creating situations in which justice delayed means justice denied. And ultimately, if we fail to make our courts reflect America, we risk an America where there may be less respect for the decisions of our courts.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

June 24

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC, from Los Angeles, CA.

June 25

In the afternoon, the President participated in a wreath-laying ceremony at the Korean War Memorial.

June 26

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Chappaqua, NY.

June 27

In the morning, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The President declared a major disaster in Minnesota and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and flooding beginning on May 17 and continuing.

The President declared a major disaster in North Dakota and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms, flooding, and ground saturation beginning on June 12 and continuing.

June 28

The President announced his intention to nominate Kenneth Y. Tomlinson to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

June 29

The President announced his intention to nominate Everett L. Mosely to be Inspector General of the U.S. Agency for International Development.

The President announced his intention to nominate Marjory E. Searing to be Assistant Secretary and Director General of the U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service of the Department of Commerce.

The President announced the nomination of Donald Mancuso as Inspector General of the Department of Defense.

The President announced his intention to appoint Kitty Dukakis, Michael C. Gelman, Stephen D. Susman, and Burton P. Resnick to the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council.

The President announced his intention to appoint Charles Richard Barnes, Colleen M. Kelley, Janice R. Lachance, Edward B.